period.23「Gloomy Fireworks」

「I'm sorry」
AYA-CHAN...
HM?

LET ME GO.
HUG...
...WHY?
BECAUSE...
IF WE STAY LIKE THIS...
!
drip
drip
drip
drip

Please watch your step on the way home
Today's fireworks display has come to an end.
I'm sorry...
WHY ARE YOU CRYING LIKE THAT?
HUH?!
OOH...
I won't be able to stop my tears..
I DID A LOT OF UNFORGIVABLE THINGS TO YOU BACK THEN.
NO... I JUST COULDN'T HOLD MY TEARS BACK ANYMORE
MITSUKI, DO YOU STILL CRY LIKE THIS A LOT?
SNIFF YEAH... THANKS.
HAVE YOU CALMED DOWN?

I'M SORRY, TOO.
I COULDN'T THINK ABOUT YOU AT ALL, AYA-CHAN.
No matter what happened, he stayed calm and determined, and I came to rely on him.
I WAS JUST CHASING MY IDEALS AND DOING THINGS MY WAY.
DON'T APOLOGIZE, MITSUKI.
I WAS SO LONELY WHEN WE WENT OUR SEPARATE WAYS,
BUT I WANTED TO BECOME STRONGER AT THE TIME.
"IF THERE'S SOMETHING IMPORTANT TO ME, THEN I CAN BECOME STRONGER," RIGHT?
I'M SURE YOU GET NOW WHAT I MEANT BY THAT.

I'M HAPPY THAT I COULD FACE YOU AGAIN LIKE THIS, MITSUKI.
I TOLD YOU, DIDN'T I? IT'S BECAUSE I MET YOU THAT I'M HERE NOW.
FOR ME, THERE'S NOTHING MORE PRECIOUS.

Kiss
WANT TO HEAD BACK?
...You...
rustle
...Huh!
You kissed me!?
WHY SO TENSE?
?
Tha-
Of course I'm tense
It's not normal for someone to do that so smoothly!
Is this supposed to be a greeting or something?

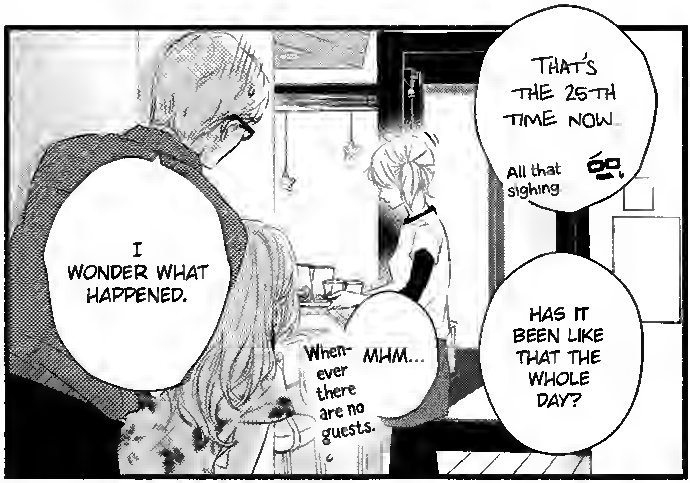
I'M NOT DOING THIS HALF-HEARTEDLY.
I KNOW.
I'M DOING IT BECAUSE IT'S YOU, MITSUKI.
RUSTLE
YOU CAN LOOK AT WHOEVER YOU WANT.
THAT STILL DOESN'T MEAN I'M FINE WITH IT...
UM...
... NO.

BUT FROM NOW ON, I WANT YOU TO SEE ME FOR THE MAN I AM.
...HUH?

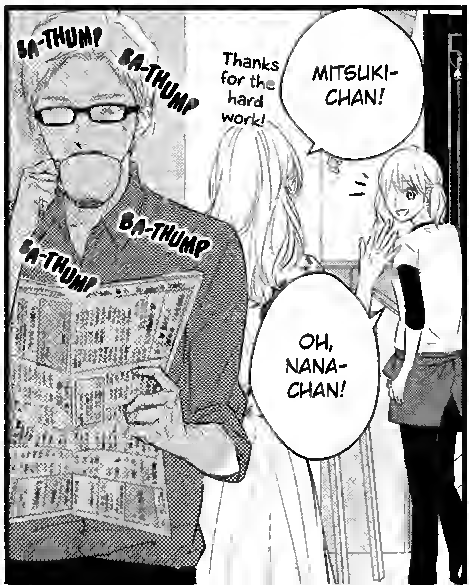
I was able to see Aya-chan in a different light.
... In that moment,

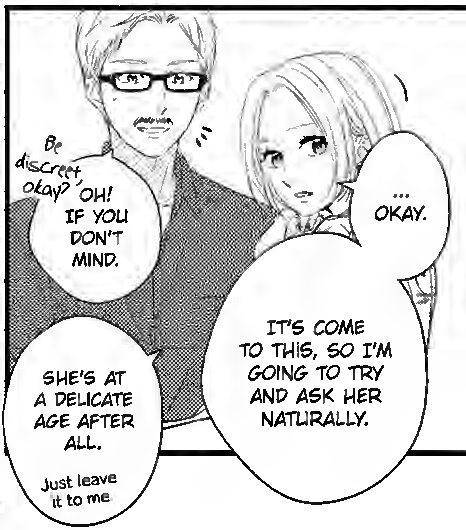
You know exactly who I'm talking about~♪
... Lose to who..?
BECAUSE THEN THERE'S NO WAY I'D LOSE.
... Though that only lasted for a second.

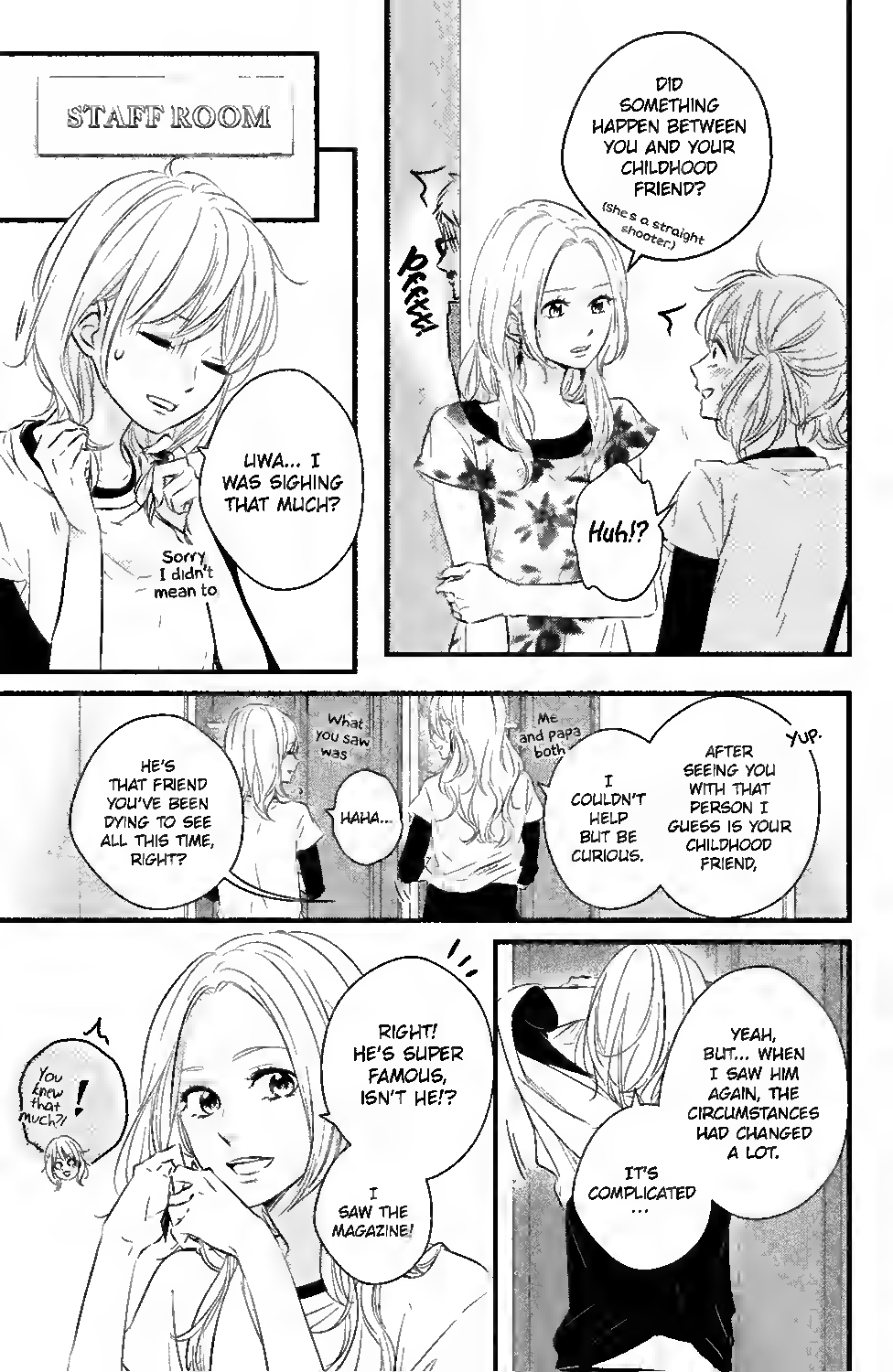
words cafe.
VROOM
squeak
squeak
Thanks for the food!
Thank you very much!
CLANG CLANG
squeak
.....
HAA...


I WONDER WHAT HAPPENED.
MHM...
Whenever there are no guests.
HAS IT BEEN LIKE THAT THE WHOLE DAY?
All that sighing
THAT'S THE 25TH TIME NOW

AH! THAT'S THE 26TH..
sigh...
HMN, WE'RE WORRYING NONSTOP.
It's not like we can ask her, though
MUST BE SOMETHING THAT HAPPENED AFTER THIS SCENE.
It's been on my mind


BA-THUMP
BA-THUMP
BA-THUMP
BA-THUMP
MITSUKI-CHAN!
Thanks for the hard work!
OH, NANA-CHAN!

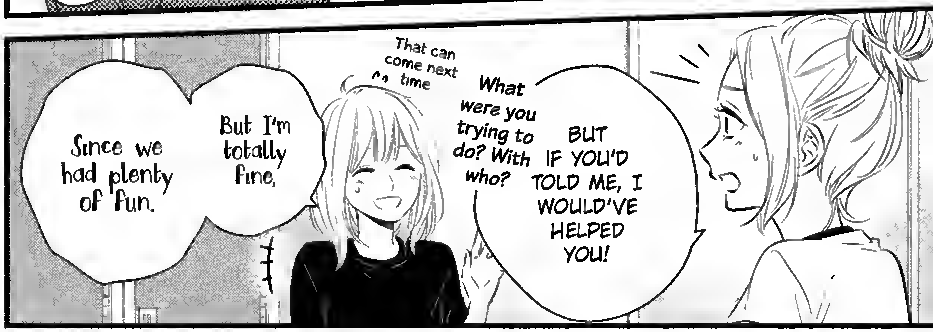

Be discreet okay?
OH! IF YOU DON'T MIND.
SHE'S AT A DELICATE AGE AFTER ALL.
Just leave it to me
... OKAY.
IT'S COME TO THIS, SO I'M GOING TO TRY AND ASK HER NATURALLY.

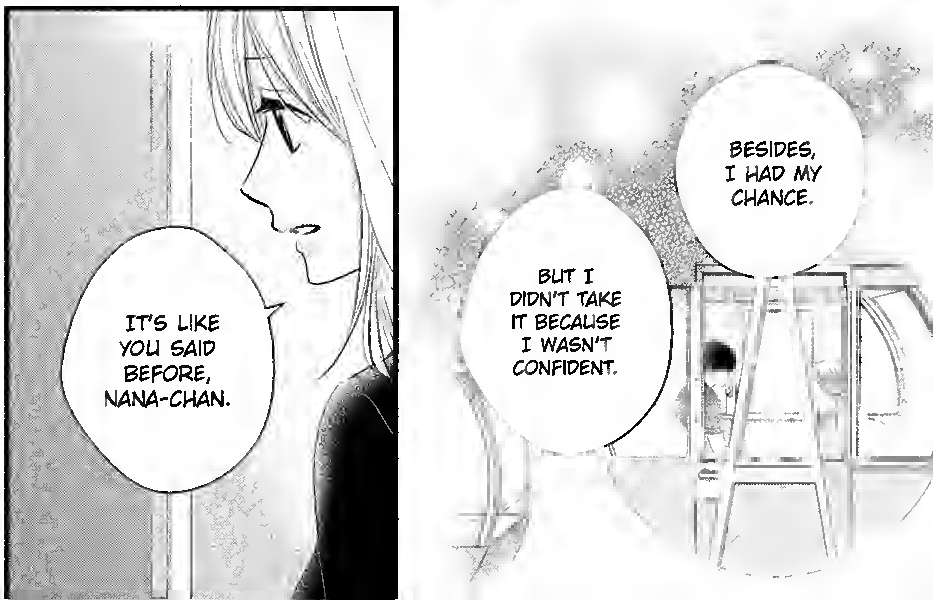

STAFF ROOM
UWA... I WAS SIGHING THAT MUCH?
Sorry, I didn't mean to
DRUM
DID SOMETHING HAPPEN BETWEEN YOU AND YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIEND?
(she's a straight shooter)
Huh!?
HE'S THAT FRIEND YOU'VE BEEN DYING TO SEE ALL THIS TIME, RIGHT?
What you saw was
HAHA...
Me and papa both
I COULDN'T HELP BUT BE CURIOUS.
AFTER SEEING YOU WITH THAT PERSON I GUESS IS YOUR CHILDHOOD FRIEND,
YUP.
You knew that much?!
RIGHT! HE'S SUPER FAMOUS, ISN'T HE!?
I SAW THE MAGAZINE!
YEAH, BUT... WHEN I SAW HIM AGAIN, THE CIRCUMSTANCES HAD CHANGED A LOT.
IT'S COMPLICATED ...

EVEN NOW HE'S REALLY, REALLY IMPORTANT TO ME.
I'VE ALWAYS BEEN PROUD THAT HE'S MY FRIEND.
OF COURSE I THINK IT'S AMAZING THAT HE BECAME A FAMOUS ATHLETE, BUT...
EVEN IF HE HADN'T, I'D STILL BE ABLE TO RESPECT HIM SINCE HE'S ALWAYS BEEN SOMEONE I LOOK UP TO.
BUT...
"I want you to see me for the man I am"
WHEN I START TO THINK ABOUT FEELINGS THAT GO BEYOND THAT,
I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO DO.
...WEIRD, RIGHT? CONSIDERING THIS IS ABOUT ME...
Although this is a first for me
NOT AT ALL.
I KNOW A BIT ABOUT THAT MYSELF.

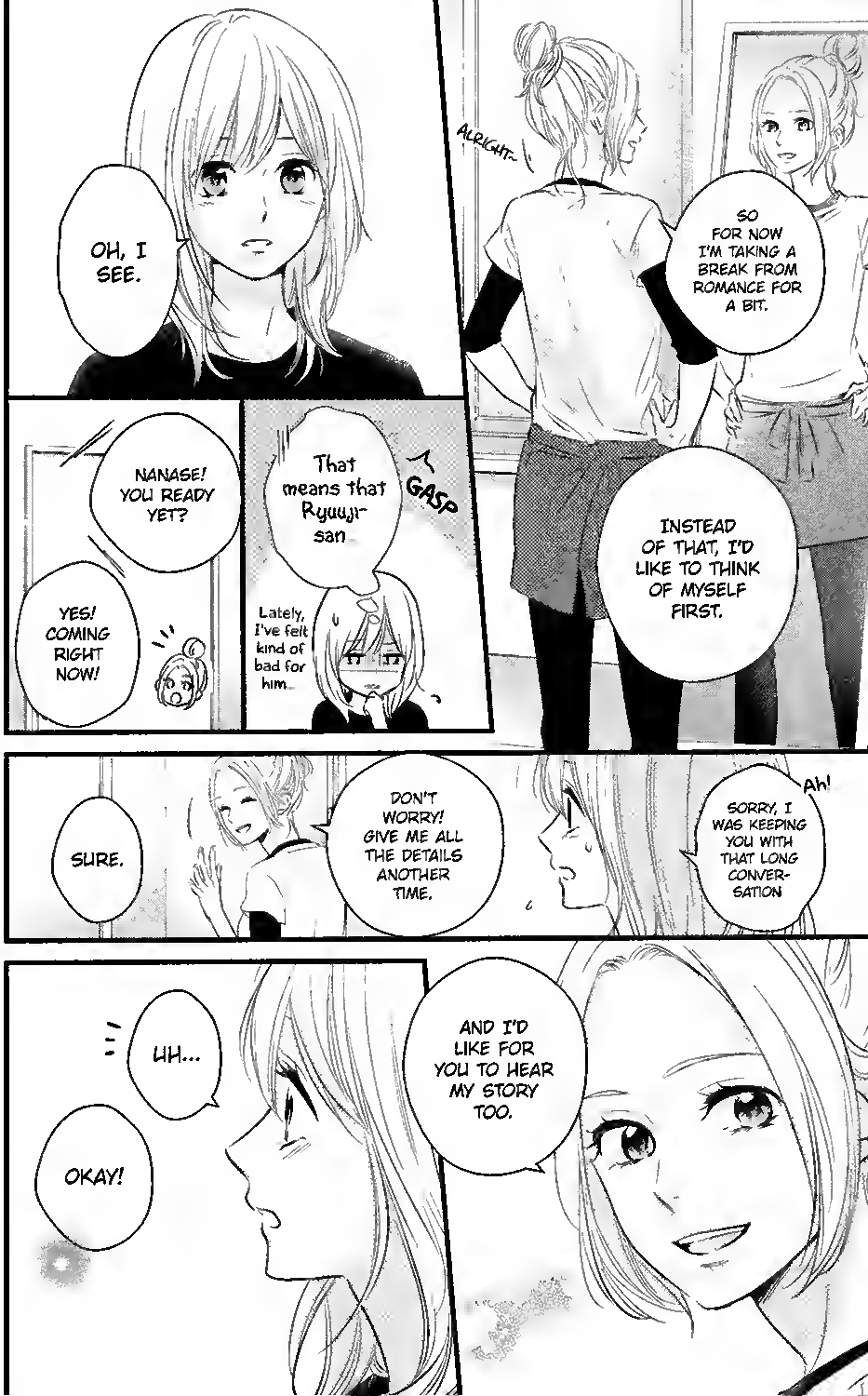
THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS SMOOTH SAILING WHEN YOU'RE WORLDS APART.
ONE WAY OR ANOTHER, YOU'VE GOT TO FIND THE CONFIDENCE TO BRIDGE THAT DIFFERENCE,
YOU'LL END UP FEELING RESTLESS IN THE TRUE SENSE OF THE WORD.
... OH.
IS THAT IT?
MAYBE...
I guess especially with Aya-chan it's like that.
Asakura-san and the others too.
ANYWAY,
IS THERE SOMEONE ELSE YOU LIKE?
WHIRL
Huh!?

THE AMUSEMENT PARK.
AND YOUR LUCKY JINX.
Uh...
grin
How was it?
Th-that...
It didn't do anything.
Actually, the lucky jinx didn't work.
WHAT?


That can come next time
What were you trying to do? With who?
BUT IF YOU'D TOLD ME, I WOULD'VE HELPED YOU!
But I'm totally fine.
Since we had plenty of fun.


BESIDES, I HAD MY CHANCE.
BUT I DIDN'T TAKE IT BECAUSE I WASN'T CONFIDENT.
IT'S LIKE YOU SAID BEFORE, NANA-CHAN.

I WANT TO BE ABLE TO SEE THINGS MORE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE...
I KNOW WHAT THAT FEELS LIKE, TOO.
... YOU DO?
BECAUSE I HAD SOMEONE I REALLY LIKED.
Oh!
I... I SEE...
BUT, IN MY CASE...
THEY WERE A LOT OLDER,
AND OUR UPBRINGING WAS COMPLETELY DIFFERENT.
IT DIDN'T WORK OUT BECAUSE I COULDN'T FIND A SOLUTION TO THIS.


OH, I SEE.
ALRIGHT-
SO FOR NOW I'M TAKING A BREAK FROM ROMANCE FOR A BIT.
INSTEAD OF THAT, I'D LIKE TO THINK OF MYSELF FIRST.
NANASE! YOU READY YET?
YES! COMING RIGHT NOW!
That means that Ryuuji-san
GASP
Lately, I've felt kind of bad for him
SURE.
DON'T WORRY! GIVE ME ALL THE DETAILS ANOTHER TIME.
Ah!
SORRY, I WAS KEEPING YOU WITH THAT LONG CONVER-SATION
UH...
OKAY!
AND I'D LIKE FOR YOU TO HEAR MY STORY TOO.

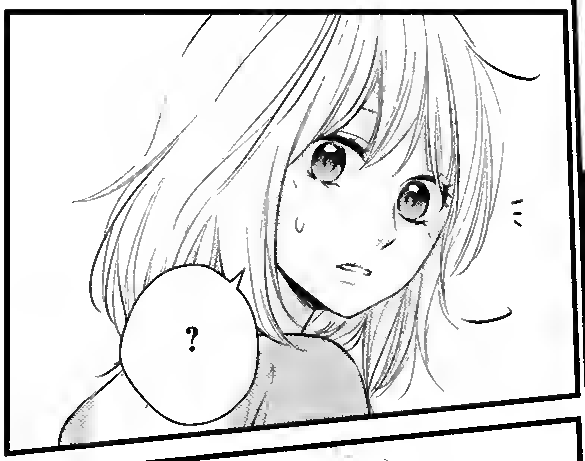
FOR NANA-CHAN AND I TO BE ABLE TO TALK ABOUT LOVE STORIES...
I'm glad
my heart's pounding
THANKS FOR THE HARD WORK!
SEE YOU LATER!
THUD
Don't forget to buy eggs okay?
We're having sukiyaki!
AND I'D LIKE TO THINK ABOUT MYSELF LIKE SHE DOES.
It'd be nice if I could talk about my feelings more clearly next time.
I'm buying them on the way home now.
... I REALLY WANTED TO STAY A LITTLE, THOUGH.
I think what's clear right now, is
that the guy I want to see most is...
HEY.

AH...
YO, MITSUKI.
SEIRIN
SEIRIN
... GOING HOME ALREADY?
YEAH.

Sh... she's there.
OH, OKAY.
...
ZOOM
WHOA!
WAS NANA-CHAN THERE TOO?
Ryuuji-san...!
YEAH...
See you.
Now I don't feel so sorry for you anymore.!
He's all fired up
SEE YOU LATER.
SEE YA, MITSUKI.
WELL, LET'S HURRY UP AND GO!
ONE THING BEFORE YOU GO HOME.
?
TADA!
HOLD ON A SEC!
Wah~!

DID YOU GO ON THAT DATE WITH KAMIYAMA?
Huh!?
Why do you know about that!?
YUP, I KNEW IT.
BUT IT WAS A BIT DIFFERENT FROM A DATE.
?
WE HUNG OUT AND SAW FIRE-WORKS.
How's that any different?
HEY, NOW! YOU KNOW THAT'S A REGULAR DATE, RIGHT?
No.
Like with boyfriend and girl-friend
IT'S NOT LIKE THAT.
ANYWAY!
WELL, SINCE SHE HERSELF IS SAYING IT WAS DIFFERENT...
...
YEAH.
NAH, TWO PEOPLE AT A FIREWORKS DISPLAY IS A DATE!
?

I THINK YOU'RE DENSE IN THAT AREA, MITSUKI!!
HUH?
DEFINITELY
MAYBE YOU OUGHT TO PAY A LITTLE MORE ATTENTION.
CHILDHOOD FRIENDS OR NOT, HE'S STILL A GUY.
YEAH, THAT'S RIGHT! YOU'RE GETTING PLAYED WITH.
NO, I'M NOT! I'LL BE FINE!
WHEN WE'RE TOGETHER, I CAN TELL I WILL.
WE KNOW EACH OTHER SO WELL.
REALLY, AYA-CHAN WOULD NEVER DO THAT TO ME.


?

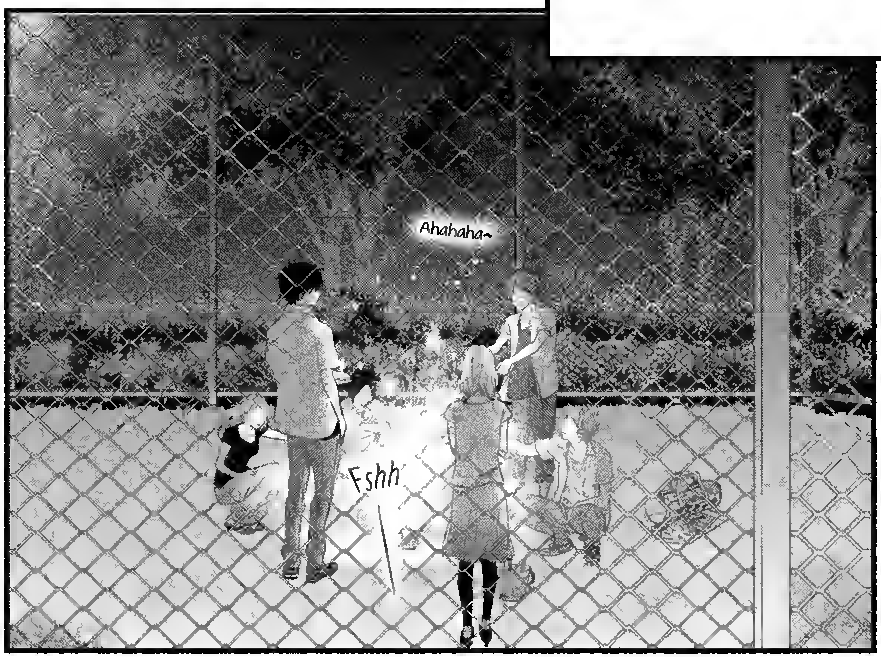
ARE YOU FREE TONIGHT?
... TONIGHT?

HE'S SO DAMN FLASHY, THOUGH!
Geh!
And that's coming from you.
You too
MITSUKI.

WHY DON'T YOU JOIN US FOR SOME FIREWORKS?
WHAT?
I DECIDED JUST NOW.
THAT'S THE FIRST TIME I'M HEARING THIS.
US...?
SAME HERE.
... YEAH!

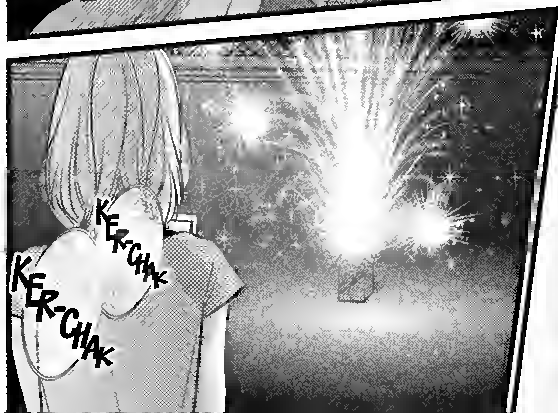
I'D LOVE TO SEE FIRE-WORKS WITH EVERYONE!
HEY~ ISN'T THIS KINDA SUDDEN?
It'll be the first fireworks of the year!
I'm not complaining but
I'll come after dinner okay?
Bye-bye!
YEAH~
LATER!
HM?
...
YOU'RE FINE WITH IT NOT BEING JUST THE TWO OF YOU?
WELL, HOW ABOUT WE BUY SOME FOOD AND GO?
SOUNDS GOOD
WE'LL SAY HI TO NANA-CHAN, TOO.

ACTUALLY, I WAS A LITTLE IMPATIENT.
BOY, YOU EVEN SAID TO JOIN "US"...
NAH, IT'S FINE SINCE MITSUKI LOOKED SO HAPPY.
"Besides, he had a connection in the past with her; that can't be changed."
EVEN THOUGH I WAS HOPING SHE'D GET THE MESSAGE
THERE, THERE.
PAT PAT
IT'S PRACTICALLY IMPOSSIBLE.


Ahahaha~
Fshh

It's so Pretty
KER-CHAK

Whoaa
KER-CHAK


KER-CHAK
KER-CHAK

I got it~
YEAH, REINA-CHAN WANTED THEM.
Everyone's fine with pictures
THEY INVITED HER TOO, BUT SHE'S IN THE MIDDLE OF A TRIP.
THAT WAS FAST!
POP
Chat's not enough touching
I'll take some more and send them.
IT'S PRETTY RARE TO SEE YOU TAKING PICTURES, MITSUKI-CHAN.
THERE'S A BAN ON ROCKET FIREWORKS IN THE AREA
Not enough touching?
What am I supposed to do about that?
YEAH, GO AHEAD.
It's a pinwheel~
HEY, NANA-CHAN! THIS THING DOESN'T MAKE ANY NOISE SO IT'S FINE, RIGHT?
I- I GOT IT...!
FLOMP
KER-CHAK
SEND!!
HUH?
It's coming here!
TWIRRRL
AL-RIGHT. HERE GOES!
TOSS
gasp

MITSUKI.
I did it!
POP
Good!!
HERE.
OH, THANKS.
MITSUKI-CHAN.
TAKE A PICTURE WITH ME.
OKAY!
I WAS SO BUSY TAKING PICTURES THAT I FORGOT.

ASAKURA-KUN, DO YOU MIND?
I'M TAKING IT NOW
Let's hold up the sparklers.
Okay!
Yay!!
TAKE ONE WITH ME TOO.
Ring-ring!♪
THANKS!
STE
.....

WHAT?
NO, IT'S FROM KAMIYAMA-SAN.
Aya-chan?
OH...
IS IT REINA-CHAN?
On Line?
SORRY, I READ A LITTLE OF IT.
Heading off now. I'll message you the next time I'm back in Japan.
I-IT'S FINE...
LOOKS LIKE HE'S GOING ON AN OVERSEAS TRIP.
About when we met...
DID HE SAY SOMETHING ABOUT THE INTER HIGH COMPETITION?
HUH...?
OH YEAH,
HOUJOU DOES THAT EVERY YEAR...

I GUESS HE WAS VERY CONFIDENT ABOUT WINNING THE CHAMPIONSHIP.
I SEE...
UH, WELL, NOTHING IN PARTICULAR...
WELL...
WHAT DO THE CHAMPIONSHIPS EVEN FEEL LIKE?
I'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT THAT A LOT.
This one is broken—
WHERE'S THE LIGHTER YOU JUST BOUGHT?
TOWA!
OH, IT'S RIGHT HERE.
Coming!

To make him think about the Inter High competition...
I shouldn't have brought up the overseas trip?
...DON'T TELL ME...
I HAVE NO SENSE OF DELICACY.
I'm the worst...
STEP
You okay?
That's dangerous.
GEEZ— BE MORE CAREFUL, TOWA.
I'M FINE.
I'LL GO COOL IT.
HUH? WHAT'S WRONG?
HE BURNED HIMSELF?
Aahhh!

HE SPACED OUT TRYING TO LIGHT THE FIREWORKS.
THAT'S DANGER-OUS.
OH...
IT SHOULD BE FINE SINCE HE ONLY BURNED HIS FINGERTIP BUT...
HE MUST'VE BEEN THINKING ABOUT BASKETBALL AGAIN.
Then he should have taken better care of his hands, geez
IN THAT CASE, SHOULD I GO GET A FIRST-AID KIT?
I...
I'LL GO CHECK ON HIM!
DASH
SPLASH
ASAKURA-KUN!

CAN YOU STILL PLAY BASKET-BALL?
YEAH, I'M FINE.
WHAT?
ARE YOU OKAY?
SQUEAK
SQUEAK
Just got a blister.
YOU DIDN'T HAVE TO WORRY SO MUCH.
Phew~
THAT'S A RELIEF...
YEAH, MORE OR LESS...
If I hadn't then you wouldn't have gotten distracted thinking about basketball.
I'm so sorry.
I'm sorry. It's my fault for bringing up that topic...
YES I DO!

I WAS JUST THINKING ABOUT HOW IT'D BE NICE
IF I COULD TAKE A PICTURE WITH YOU...
NO...
...?
A PICTURE?
...?
NAH, NEVER-MIND.
IT'S FINE THE WAY IT IS, SO...
OF COURSE I CAN TAKE A PICTURE WITH YOU, ASAKURA-KUN...
Well? How about we take one later?
YEAH.

JUST STAY HERE WITH ME A LITTLE LONGER.
.....
Asakura-kun?

SOUKA,
ABBY, CHAR
JENI, CHANE,
HUES, VANILLA
IZAL, STEPH
CHAR, STEPH,
KY, KOKUN
STEPH, CHAR
NONA, KEICHAN,
ABBY, ZAI
SOUKA, CHANE
CHAR
This was a multi-group joint project between Summer Rain, Damn Feels, Agent of Change, Matteiru and ShoujoHearts
Big thanks to everyone for chipping in! :D
Summer Rain
summerrain.moe
HARU MATSU BOKURA
BY ANASHIN
CHAPTERS 19-24